

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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66

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 OMB-01 SCEM-02 DRC-01 /122 W

----- 024259

R 051426Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9987

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 7762

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR AKINS' INTERVIEW IN U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

1. ON OCT 4 MICHAEL ELIZUR, DIRNOAMNDIV, MFA, CALLED DCM TO DISCUSS AP REPORT OF INTERVIEW WITH AMBASSADOR AKINS WHICH REPORTEDLY IS IN CURRENT ISSUE OF U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT. ELIZUR NOTED THAT HE WAS RAISING SUBJECT "UNOFFICIALLY" BUT THAT REPORTS OF THIS INTERVIEW HAD A DISTURBING EFFECT IN HIGH LEVELS OF GOI.

2. AS CONCERNS SUBSTANCE OF INTERVIEW, ELIZUR CLAIMED THERE WAS A MARKED DIFFERENCE IN TENOR BETWEEN REPORTED REMARKS OF AMB AKINS AND THOSE MADE BY GOVERNOR LOVE AND "OTHERS" ON THE KEY SUBJECT AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE US WOULD GIVE IN TO "OIL BALCKMAIL" BY THE ARABS WITH RESPECT TO ITS MID EAST POLICY. HE ADDED THAT THE REPORTED AKINS REMARKS SUGGESTED US WAS PREPARED TO CAVE UNDER SAUDI PRESSURE AND THIS COULD BE SIGNIFICANT COMING FROM THE US AMBASSADOR WHO WOULD BE EXPECTED TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM. ELIZUR ENDED BY WONDERING "WHO SPEAKS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION."

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3. DCM NOTED WE HAD SEEN WIRE SERVICE EXCERPT OF REPORTED

INTERVIEW BUT HAD NOT AS YET RECEIVED FULL TEXT OF INTERVIEW AS CARRIED IN U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT. THE ANSWER TO THE KEY QUESTION, HOWEVER, WAS VERY SIMPLE: THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS FOR THE U.S. ON THIS SUBJECT AND HE HAS MADE OUR POLICY VERY CLEAR. THIS POLICY HAS BEEN REPEATED PUBLICLY BY THE SECRETARY AND OTHER ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMEN. WE ASSUMED THE GOI WAS WELL AWARE OF THE FOREGOING.

4. ELIZUR THEN BACKED OFF FROM HIS ORIGINAL POSITION BY NOTING THAT, OF COURSE, HIS GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF AND APPRECIATED THE US POSITION ON OIL BLACKMAIL AS PUBLICLY REITERATED BY THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY AND OTHER LEADING SPOKESMEN. AT THE SAME TIME, THE ISRAELIS WERE UNEASY ABOUT THE REPORTED AKINS COMMENTS.

5. COMMENT: WE PASS THE FOREGOING FOR THE DEPT'S INFORMATION. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SUBJECT WILL BE RAISED IN SIMILAR TERMS AT THE DEPT BY SOMEONE IN THE ISRAELI EMBASSY. IN DUE COURSE, WE ASSUME THE EMBASSY WILL RECEIVE THE FULL TEXT OF THE AKINS INTERVIEW FOR OUR INTERNAL USE. IN ANY EVENT, I DO NOT BELIEVE ANY ACTION IS CALLED FOR AND DO NOT INTEND TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO RAISE THE SUBJECT WITH THE GOI IN THE FUTURE. SHOULD THE ISRAELIS RAISE THE SUBJECT WITH US AGAIN, AND IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CONTRARY, WE WILL REPLY ALONG LINES PARA 3 AND AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF AKINS INTERVIEW.

6. WE WONDER IF ELIZUR'S MOTIVE IN RAISING THIS SUBJECT WAS TO ELICIT INFO ON CURRENT US POLICY TOWARDS "OIL BLACKMAIL" OR, RATHER, TO TRY TO PUT PRESSURE ON AND PERHAPS INTIMIDATE AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO AN IMPORTANT THIRD COUNTRY. IF THE LATTER WAS THE MOTIVE, IT IS CLEARLY OUT OF ORDER AND, BASED ON WHAT I KNOW OF AMB AKINS' CHARACTER, DOOMED TO FAILURE.
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